

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 7-8, and 13-14 have been canceled. Claims 3-6, 9-12, and 15-16 remain pending in the present application. Applicants amend claims 3 and 9 to independent form incorporating all limitations of their respective base and intervening claims. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-2, 7-8, and 13-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,038,233 to Hamamoto et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,251,205 to Callon et al. Applicants cancel the rejected claims.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that claims 15 and 16 have been allowed and that claims 3-6 and 9-12 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants amend claims 3 and 9 to independent form incorporating all limitations of claims 1-2 and 7-8, respectively, from which they depend. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner allow claims 3 and 9, along with claims 4-6 and 10-12 dependent therefrom, respectively. Applicants submit that the reasons for allowability provided include only the Examiner's interpretation, which should in no way limit the scope of the allowable claims.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's implicit finding that the additional U.S. patents and publication made of record, but not applied, do not render the claims of the present application unpatentable, whether these references are considered alone or in combination with others.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider

this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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Docket No.: FUJI 19.448 (100794-00187)
DTC:jc